

## With the First Nighters.

### LA GIOCONDA.

#### (Appreciation.)

D'Annunzio is essentially a poet. His language sparkles with the irradiant jewels of rhetoric or murmurs and thunders as it sways to the tumult of a great passion. One leaves the place where his resonant voice has been heard, sounded by some soulful artist, with his heart still thrilled with distant rumblings, harmonies that blend with luted melodies, like summer showers falling upon red-lipped roses in the garden of the muses.

Above all the Italian genius is an apostle of the transcendence of art. In the slmoon of a great passion this note is still sounded—art that is above all earthly gifts and far surpassing the love of woman. It is idolatry of art which evades no renunciation and causes all else to be laid as a votive offering to the superior goddess. That is what Silvia, the beloved wife but the lesser goddess, learned in Gioconda. And Florence Roberts' art is called upon to portray the hopeless struggle of the deserted wife against a more powerful and over-mastering passion, in which there are occasional glimpses of sensuous abandonment but the veiled figure of art is always predominant. Nothing Miss Roberts has done is more beautifully or appreciatively artistic than when, mastered by a great love, she combats the unseen enemy by a futile deception and when on love's altar was laid the sacrifice of her hands, which were surpassingly beautiful and the inspiration and delight of Settala in other days. Nothing could be more imposingly tragic than the closing scene between Silvia and her daughter Beata. The performance was marred by the strident and over-done work of Lucius Henderson, whose powers are inadequate for a characterization so intense. Mr. Howard Scott was about the same doleful and inane piece of statuary as in previous performances.

A. K. N.

There is entire curse of sorrow ahead for the Salt Lake theatregoer, who has been jaded full oft during the winter months by performances that hardly called for demonstrations of unmixed delight. All in one cluster, in the merry month of May, when the buoyancy of spring makes everything else looks good to us, there will be seen at the Salt Lake theatre Anna Held, Richard Mansfield, Maude Adams and E. H. Sothern, who will arrive here fresh from eastern triumphs in the order named. It is some time since Mansfield and Adams have ventured more than a few furlongs from the glare of Broadway, and the prospect of seeing them and Held and Sothern all in one month is quite overwhelming. It is certainly reaching the wine on the theatrical menu for the local season, which has scarcely been more than an indifferent one, largely because many stars whom we expected could not be induced to come west and largely through courtesy of the fight being made against Messrs. Klaw & Erlanger.

Mr. Mansfield will be seen in Ivan the Terrible, which so moved the cynical New York critics that they forgot themselves long enough to refer to Mr. Mansfield's performance as the best thing seen there during the season with the possible exception of Henry Irving as Louis XI. "The Little Sister of Jose" will be Maude Adams' bill of fare, the pretty romance in which Miss Adams has made a great impression. The bill for E. H. Sothern will probably be "The Proud Prince," in which he is said to have achieved an even greater success than in "If I Were King," which he played here to crowded houses near the close of last season.

One G. Pyper is certainly to be congratulated upon securing such attractions.

### LA GIOCONDA.

#### (Depreciation.)

There is no one to question the poetic quality in the glorious lines from the mighty mind of D'Annunzio in his tragedy of Gioconda. That is not the point.

The beauty and thrill of his glorious language cannot find a place of lodgment in the heart, if overshadowing it all is a repellant thought echoing from this tragic muse. The "jewels of his rhetoric" cannot counterbalance the decadent nature of the theme, in which such a repulsive character as Settala is created, and such a play, no matter how glittering the poetic embellishments, serves no good purpose on the stage.

A sociological study, my friend Nicholson would say, the triumph of art "above all earthly gifts." And incidentally the triumph of the courtesan over healthy love, even when in defense of that love the wife has made great sacrifice.

Mrs. Leslie Carter and a number of others have said that "woman is born to sacrifice," but when realism produces such a spectacle of sadness as the loss which Silvia suffers, for a degenerate who, pitiless and obdurate, casts her off, the whole baneful story running to a harrowing end, the tragedy is intolerable, and not even the poetry of a D'Annunzio is recompense for the unbeautiful thoughts from his most fertile brain. Strange as it may seem, there can be decency, even in the poetic mind, and while Gioconda may be very real, and very true to modern Italian life, Settala's devotion to art is a most unpleasant spectacle in the guise of its portrayal, and Gioconda interrupts the sunshine of life for the same reason that many another play intrudes on good nature—the direful paucity of healthy dramatic material. There is the basis of a drama in most lives, and men and women—even men and women who can appreciate true poetry—would rather laugh than suffer.

J. T. G.

#### HELD PROGRAM FOR TOMORROW.

- 1 March, "The Cavalier," (new) ..... Harris
- 2 Grand selection from "Dolly Varden," ..... Julian Edwards
- 3 Violin solo, "Rondo II." ..... DeBiot  
Mr. Shuester.
- 4 Andante from Haydn's Surprise Symphony ..... Haydn
- 5 Tenor solo, with violin obligato,  
a. "Beloved," serenade ..... Neibeling  
b. Irish Love Song ..... Lang  
Mr. Fred Graham.
- 6 Caprice, "A Musician astray in the Forest." ..... A. Herman
- 7 March, (new) "Held's 40." ..... Mr. Shuester
- 8 Solo for soprano .....  
a. Still as the night ..... Bohm  
b. Florian Song ..... Goddard  
Mrs. Mary Partridge Price.
- 9 Songs for Cornets .....  
a. "Gypsy Love Song." ..... Herbert  
Mr. Zimmerman.  
b. "Shubert's Serenade," ..... Shubert  
Mr. Leslie.
- 10 Grand overture to "Bohemian Girl," ..... Balfe

"The Unwelcome Mrs. Hatch" has been seen here before, and is generally looked upon as the best thing in Miss Roberts' present repertoire. Mr. Henderson also shows to better advantage in this performance.

A small house testified to a lack of enthusiasm here over the "Sapho" play.

When the manager for Miss Isabel Irving asked her whether after two seasons with "The Crisis,"

she would prefer to invade Europe or come westward, Miss Irving decided in favor of the west, for which we are duly thankful. It is certainly a source of joy to be permitted to see the dramatization of Mr. Churchill's novel, which everyone, including the cook, has read and gone into raptures over. The dramatization was by Mr. Churchill himself, and the story has lost none of its vital interest in the transformation. As Virginia Carvel, a great success has been achieved by Miss Irving, who is a great favorite with local playgoers.

#### SHAY.

The Rose Cecelia Shay Opera company comes to the theater the first of the week, playing "Carmen," "Il Trovatore," "Bohemian Girl," and "Faust."

Miss Shay, when heading the Gordon-Shay Opera company a year ago, considered the treatment accorded her by the press as extremely cruel, but the treatment was on account of the detail of her performances, rather than of Miss Shay personally. She possesses a beautiful voice, and her interpretation of Carmen is a noteworthy performance. Joseph Fredericks and Francis Carrier appear in the support, and it is said that the chorus and general detail has been greatly improved since Miss Shay's former appearance in this city. Let us hope that such is the case.

Richard Mansfield rarely commits himself. The other day, however, he admitted that the two roles of Ivan the Terrible and of the Prince Karl Heinrich in "Old Heidelberg" are the most taxing that he has ever played. Only the fact that they are distinctly opposite in every fibre of temperament and that by alternating them he is measurably rested would it be possible for him to continue to play either. The assumption of extreme youth or extreme old age, absolutely naive or masterful passion equally absorbs the artist's vitality.

#### "McFADDEN'S FLATS."

The E. W. Townsend, Glenn MacDonough farce, "McFadden's Row of Flats," with its merriment and song, and show girl chorus comes to the theatre next Friday evening and Saturday afternoon and night. It is said that this edition of the farce is a great help to the laughing habit; and the company is full of well known performers.

As a master of beautiful pianoforte tone Bauer can rank with Paderewski and De Pachmann at their best. Besides his ear-wooling beauty of tones, elastic, buoyant, resonant, without a suspicion either of woodiness or of striking through, clear and brilliant in pianissimo as in fortissimo, he plays with a sure sense of rhythm, with a comprehensive totality of conception that speaks the master. To play like that is to be one in ten thousand.—W. F. Apthorp, in Boston Transcript.

The banjo recital of Mr. Alfred A. Farland at the Congregational church on next Friday evening, April 1st, will be an important musical event. It has been four years since he appeared before a Salt Lake audience and during that time he has been abroad where he created a sensation by his wonderful playing. In his concert here he will be assisted by Mr. C. D. Schettler, guitar virtuoso, Miss Margery Mulvey, mandolin soloist, and the Ladies' String Quintet. A very enjoyable programme has been arranged for this event.

Under the able leadership of Miss Nora Gleason, St. Mary's choir will repeat the concert given on St. Patrick's night. The proceeds will go to Mrs. Smith, whose unfortunate case has re-